

Troubadour loose in Hurricane Irene

On the evening of October 14, 1999 Tropical Storm Irene was predicted to cross the western tip of Cuba, weaken and move along the west coast of Florida toward Tampa Bay. Oops, TS Irene became a hurricane in the late morning hours of the 15th as it barreled, not NNW but NE instead, bringing Cat 1 winds and rain to Miami. Most of Miami was at work as normal. Troubadour was on the mooring, only prepared with extra chafe gear since a south wind piles big swells into the anchorage. When I checked on her the following morning, she was on the west side of Brennan's Channel hard aground on the one sandy spot. Eye witness accounts from the anchorage residents said she parted her mooring lines in the late afternoon and sailed parallel to the spoil island. One resident who had taken refuge inside the spoil island, jumped into his inflatable dinghy and ushered Troubadour onto the sand bank. Whew! A strong pull from TowBoat US eased her back afloat the following day with the only damage a cracked cleat on the stern from the pull-off itself. NHC predictions have come along way since 1999!